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ABSTRACT

This progress report on the status of a survey of adult education in the public education system summarizes the findings of a State survey. The report of the survey, conducted under the auspices of NAPCAE and the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, is scheduled for publication by the U.S. Office of Education this fiscal year. The survey reports on every State and outlying area, using only State-provided data. The report shows that enrollments in public school adult education have grown from 1.49% of the U.S. residential population in 1947-48 to 14.98% in 1969-70. Registrations in public school adult education exceeded the number of regular students in colleges and universities by about a million, for a total of over 8 million. The increase in instructional staff for adult education did not keep pace with the rise in enrollments. Tables in the report provide statistics for the Nation, the average State, some programs, and individual States. Some comparisons with population, per capita income, and other education-related statistics are made. Enrollments in adult education in the public education system are expected to continue to rise, due to higher educational expectations, increased resources and facilities, and an increasing adult population. (KM)

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Progress Report to the
National Council of State
Directors of Adult Education
Minneapolis, November 16, 1972

FOR ORAL PRESENTATION

# ADULT EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM,

# STATES SUMMARIES, 1968-69 and 1969-70

U.S. Office of Education
National Center for Educational Statistics
Adult and Vocational Education Surveys Branch
Washington, D.C. 20202

Your chairman, Bill Ghan, asked me to give a progress report on the National Center for Educational Statistics' survey of Adult Education in the Public Education System. It is a timely request that I am pleased to fulfill.

Thanks to your cooperation, the most complete report that has ever been produced on adult education in the public education system is scheduled for publication by the U.S. Office of Education this fiscal year. Every State and outlying area is included. Only State-provided data are reported. Earlier surveys on this topic have had partial State coverage and have had to supplement adult education data from other sources. You can be proud that the current public school adult education survey was conducted under the auspices of NAPCAE and the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education.

The report reveals impressive growth in public school adult education. In 1947-48, enrollments in public school adult education amounted to 1.49 percent of the U.S. residential population. This rose to 2.70 percent in 1956-57, and, by 1968-69, to 4.18 percent.

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In the one-year period from 1968-69 to 1969-70, adult education enrollments in the public education system increased 10.8 percent--seven times faster than the increase in enrollment of children for the same time span. There were about a million more registrations in public school adult education than regular students in colleges and universities. The number of adults reported enrolled in adult education in the public education system in 1968-69 was over eight million; 15.3 percent of them were in community college adult education; 30 percent were in adult vocational education; and almost 15 percent were full-time students spending more than 15 hours a week in class. Instructional staff did not keep up with enrollments: percent increase from one year to the next in the number of teachers was 9.2 as compared to 10.8 for adult students. Average ratio ranged from 25 enrollments to one teacher in small States, 32 to one in middle-size States, and 37 to one in the largest States. The larger States and larger school districts had proportionally larger enrollments in adult education.

Findings from previous studies provided the guidelines for presenting the basic data from the current survey. The tables in this report are arranged from general to specific. Data are given for the Nation, the average State, and by some programs. Also, in our effort to maximize service to you, figures are given for individual States. The statistics are in such detail that you can rearrange the figures to pursue your own analyses. We have done some very simple comparisons with population, per capita income, median school years completed, and other education-related statistics.

Will adult education in the public education system continue to increase at the rate of 10.8 percent a year? The more education people have, the more they want. Census figures show that the median school year completed by persons age 25 and over was 10.6 in 1960 and 12.1 in 1970. Now more than half the U.S. population have completed high school. But will people with high school diplomas return to the public schools for additional--adult--education? The current survey continues the findings from earlier studies that the larger the school district, the larger the proportion of adult enrollments. In other words, the larger school districts with their accompanying resources of facilities, equipment, and teachers teaching a wide variety of subjects, have much to offer the adult learner--and adults, evidently, take advantage of the opportunities.

As population shifts so that there are more persons in adult age brackets, and as better educated adults seek more education, and as school districts consolidate and become larger and have more resources, it would appear that adult education in the public education system is bound to grow.

This survey illustrates what can be accomplished through Federal and State cooperation--not only in the adult education programs offered to the public, but also in the production of a statistical picture of adult education in the public education system. Special recognition should be given to James Fling whom you appointed chairman of the Task Force to work with the U.S. Office of Education on this survey. He has persevered in this assignment, as you well know, serving as liaison and providing continuity for the project. Thanks go also to those of you

who helped design the survey instrument and tested it for field application. We are especially appreciative of the time and expense each of you invested in collecting the data for this report. We trust you will find the product useful and provocative.

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